criticism of life in projecting the destructive erosion of selfhood through an exaggerated exercise of presumptuous power over the possibilities of the world **in** perpetuating their modes of refinement. The novels of James's major phase, while reversing the above pattern, locate the human self in the world rather than the other way round, and they also retrace all the earlier phases in the growth of refined selfhood. *The Ambassadors, The Wings of the Dove,* and *The Go Id en Bowl* liberate the creative potentialties of the self, and not only unite the self and the world in terms of achieved refinement, but also look further ahesd towards the engagement of the refined self in an active human context, in which refinement, having become an end in itself, reveaJs its empirical efficiency in restoring the blocked-up channels of human communication.

The crucial presence, or absence, of refinement enacts the drama of human selfhood in James's protagonists, artists and private individuals and pilgrims in search of society. In his quest for artistic refinement Roderick Hudson tries to involve and implicate the universe in the drama of his own self, and in the process he realises the inadequacy of his ego-centric self and its consequent incapacity to draw in the world to its own centre of being. The introverted Hudson becomes the extroverted Nick in *The Tragic Muae,* and is called upon to face the ordeal of a choice between art and politics. Nick realises the inadequacy of a universe conceived as a single factor of reality for the artist, and the extrovert retraces his steps towards his original introverted self. In his enthusiasm that he had discovered the universe inadequate, the artist becomes presumptuously critical of it, and emerges as the narrator in *The Sacred Fount,* in whom there is a hardening of the heart, the spiritual fountain-head of all great art. Emerging out of this crisis engendered by a distortion of the self, Lambert Strether and Merton Densher, both journalists, acquire a correct knowledge of both the self and the universe. They make it

clear that in refined art, as in refined life, the perfect circle of life's truth, which art endeavours to express, is drawn only when the arcs of the self and the universe come together in their inevitable fruitful complementariness. By withdrawing into his self, away from the universe, the artist withdraws away from a universe which provides him with the raw materials of his art. By withdrawing into the universe, away from his self, the artist withdraws from the very fountain-springs of his artistic creativity. Refinement lies in the artist being involved and uninvolved, in his being subjective and